

MASTER OF
KUNG FU

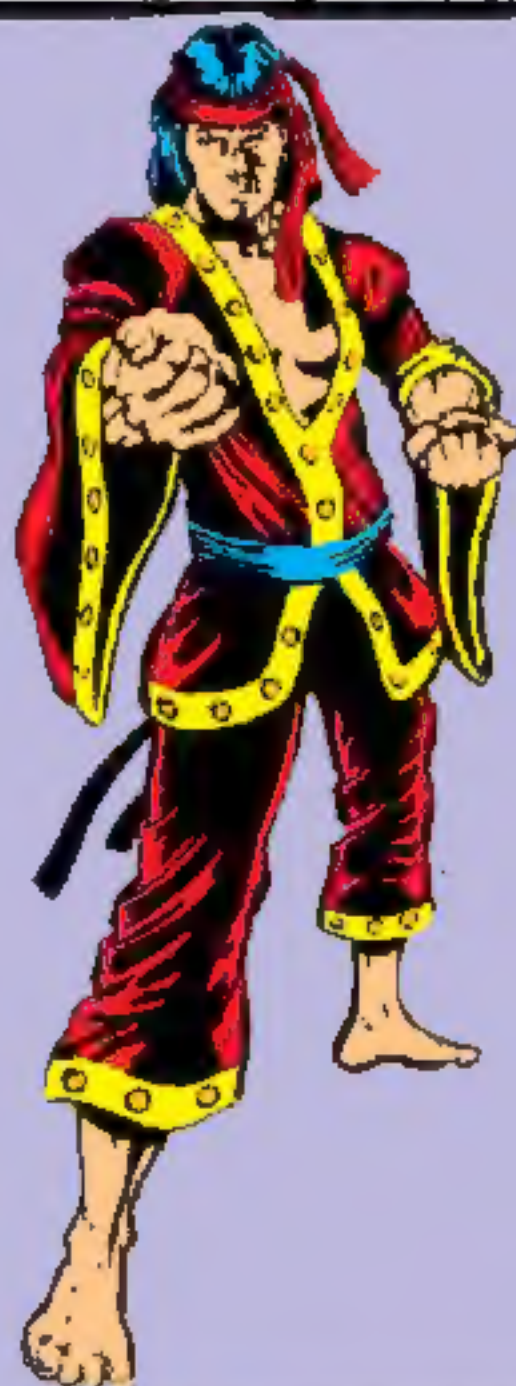
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THE HANDS OF SHANG-CHI, MASTER OF KUNG FU™

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THE ISSUE
YOU MUST
NOT MISS!

TO END --
TO BEGIN!

A STARTLING
NEW STEP
IN THE
CAREER OF
COMICS'
GREATEST
MARTIAL
ARTS
HERO!



"Call me Shang-Chi, as my **father** did, when he raised me and molded my mind and my body in the vacuum of his Honan, China retreat. I learned many things from my father. Since then, I have learned that my father is **Dr. Fu Manchu**, the most insidiously evil man on earth...and that to **honor** him would bring nothing but **dishonor** to the spirit of my **name**.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **MASTER OF KUNG FU!**™

Featuring supporting characters created by SAX RÖHMER

DONG MOENCH
WRITER

JIM CRAIG
ARTIST

PABLO MARCUS
INKER

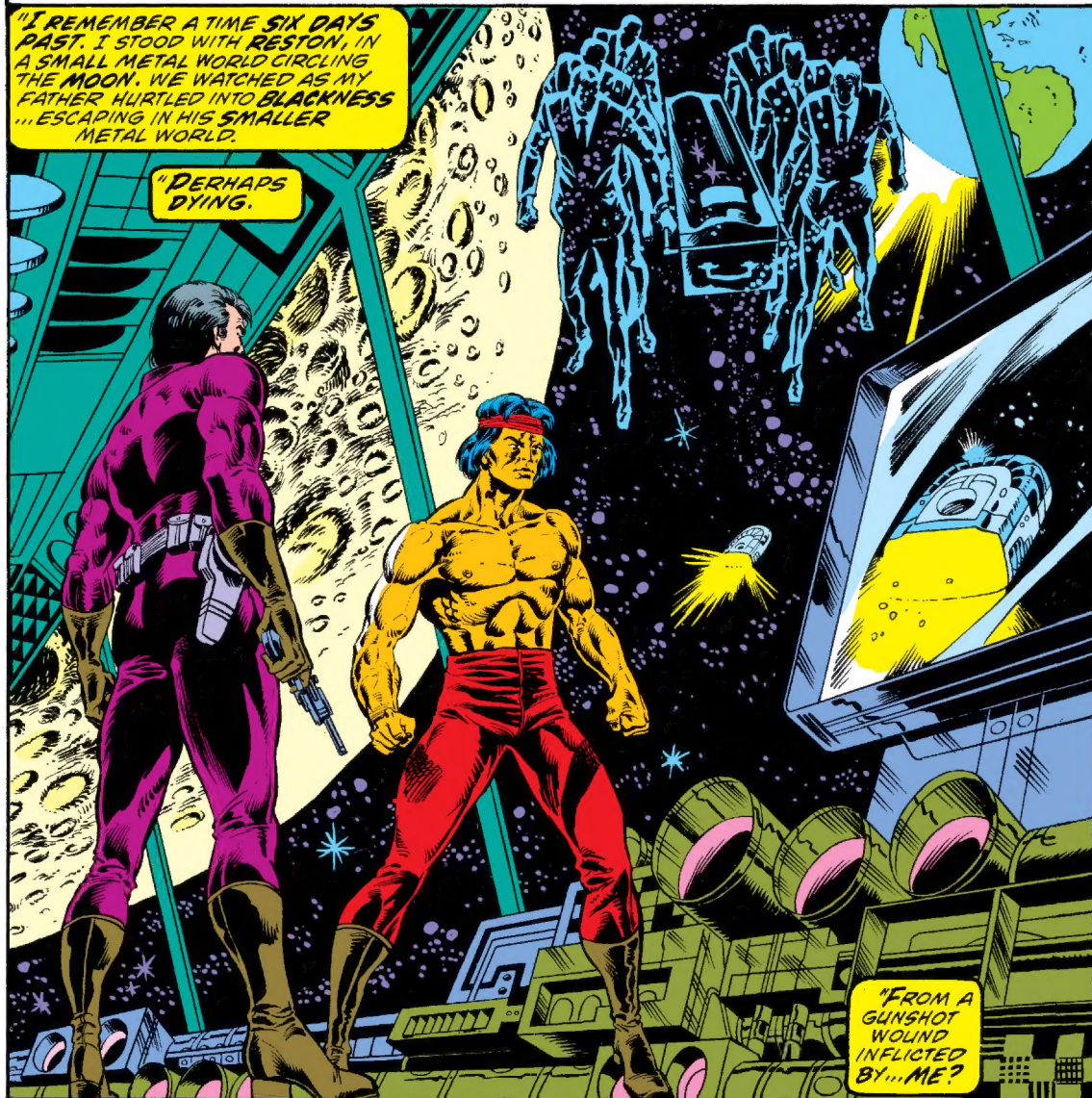
D. WOHL
LETTERING

D. WARFIELD
COLORIST

A. GOODWIN
EDITOR

"I REMEMBER A TIME SIX DAYS PAST. I STOOD WITH RESTON, IN A SMALL METAL WORLD CIRCLING THE MOON. WE WATCHED AS MY FATHER HURTTLED INTO BLACKNESS ... ESCAPING IN HIS SMALLER METAL WORLD.

"PERHAPS DYING."



"FROM A GUNSHOT WOUND INFLECTED BY... ME?"

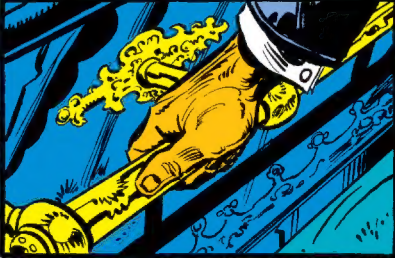
BRASS *and* **BLACKNESS** (A **DEATH** MOVE!!)

"PERHAPS IT IS THIS... CEREMONY... WHICH BRINGS THE MEMORY OF THAT TIME..."

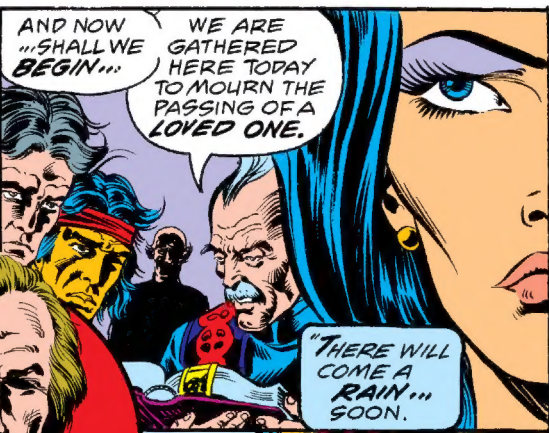
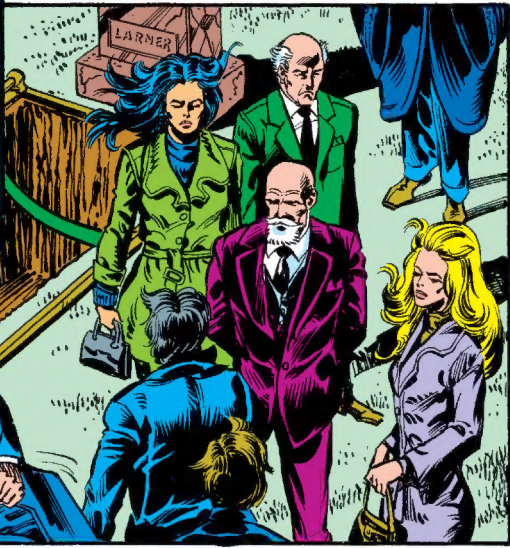


"...THIS SLOW MOVE OF SADNESS AND LOSS, IN HONOR OF DEATH..."

"...THIS COLD GRIP OF BRASS HANDLES..."



"...THIS... BOX... OF BLACKNESS"



AND NOW... SHALL WE BEGIN..."

WE ARE GATHERED HERE TODAY TO MOURN THE PASSING OF A LOVED ONE.

"THERE WILL COME A RAIN... SOON."



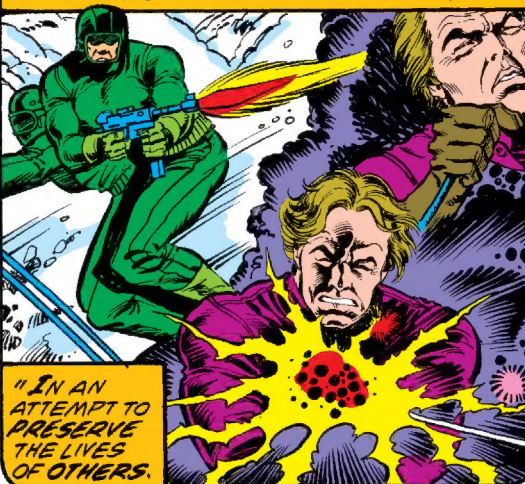
JAMES LARNER, DEARLY BELOVED, ONCE A MAN SO FILLED WITH LIFE, AND THE JOY THEREOF, THAT THE PROMISE OF HIS PASSING--

-- SEEMED A MOST DISTANT THING.

STILL, AS ALL THINGS
MUST COME TO PASS,
EARTH TO EARTH, DUST
TO DUST, ASHES TO
ASHES, SO TOO MUST
THE FLESH PASS ON
TO A HIGHER
SPIRITUAL PLANE.



BUT NOBLE WAS THE MANNER OF
JAMES LARNER'S PASSING--A SACRIFICE
OF THAT MOST PRECIOUS GIFT OF LIFE--



"IN AN
ATTEMPT TO
PRESERVE
THE LIVES
OF OTHERS.

"THERE ARE NO TEARS
ON LEIKO'S FACE.



"AND NOW,
AS JAMES
LARNER--



"--DEARLY
BELOVED--



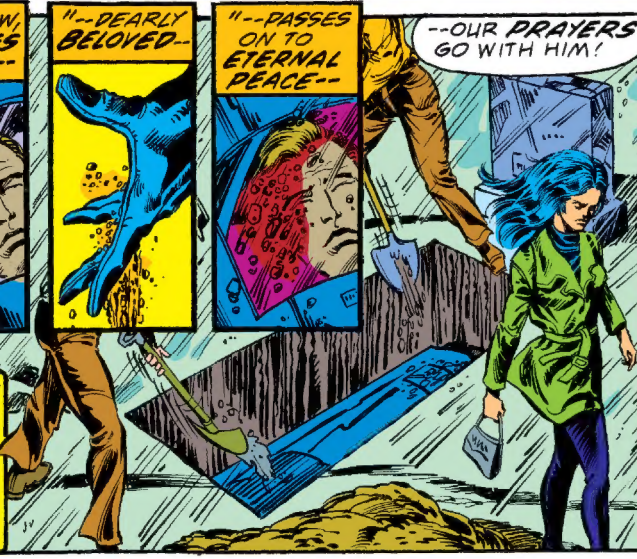
"--PASSES
ON TO
ETERNAL
PEACE--



--OUR PRAYERS
GO WITH HIM!

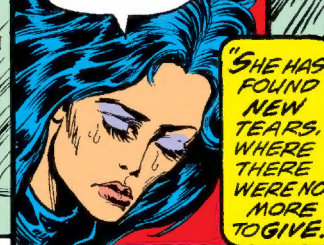
"HE HAS TOLD
NOT THE FULL
STORY... BUT
THERE ARE
THOSE AMONG
US GRATEFUL
FOR THE
OMISSIONS.

"



"LEIKO, MORE THAN
ANY OTHER.

A-AMEN...



"SHE HAS
FOUND
NEW
TEARS.
WHERE
THERE
WERE
NO
MORE
TO GIVE.

"THE RAIN FALLS HARDER,
NOW, AS THE HEAVENS ALSO
WEEP, AS I WALK FROM THE
SOUNDS OF
EARTH
GREETING
BLACKNESS.



SHANG-CHI--
COULD I, AH,
SPEAK WITH
YOU A MOMENT,
LAD?

I'VE ALREADY TOLD THE
OTHERS-- BUT I WAS UNABLE
TO CONTACT YOU. THERE
WILL BE A MEETING, IN MY
OFFICE AT WHITECHAPEL
--MI-6.



IF YOU COULD BE
THERE IN, SAY,
AN HOUR--?

I HAD PLANNED
TO BE THERE,
SMITH, ALTHOUGH
THE TIME IS
UNIMPORTANT.



EH--? BUT HOW
COULD YOU--? WHAT
DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

"I DO NOT REPLY TO SMITH'S QUESTION. INDEED, I WALK THROUGH THE RAIN, ALONE..."

"... MY MEMORIES, SILENT, BURNING, ANSWERING SMITH'S QUESTION FOR ME, BUT IN TERMS AND IMAGES HE CAN NEVER UNDERSTAND."

"MEMORIES, AGAIN, OF SIX DAYS PAST: WHEN RESTON AND I WATCHED MY FATHER DISAPPEAR INTO BLACKNESS..."

WELL, CHI, HE MANAGED TO ESCAPE IN HIS SHUTTLE-CRAFT... BUT AT LEAST FU MANCHU IS FINALLY DEAD.

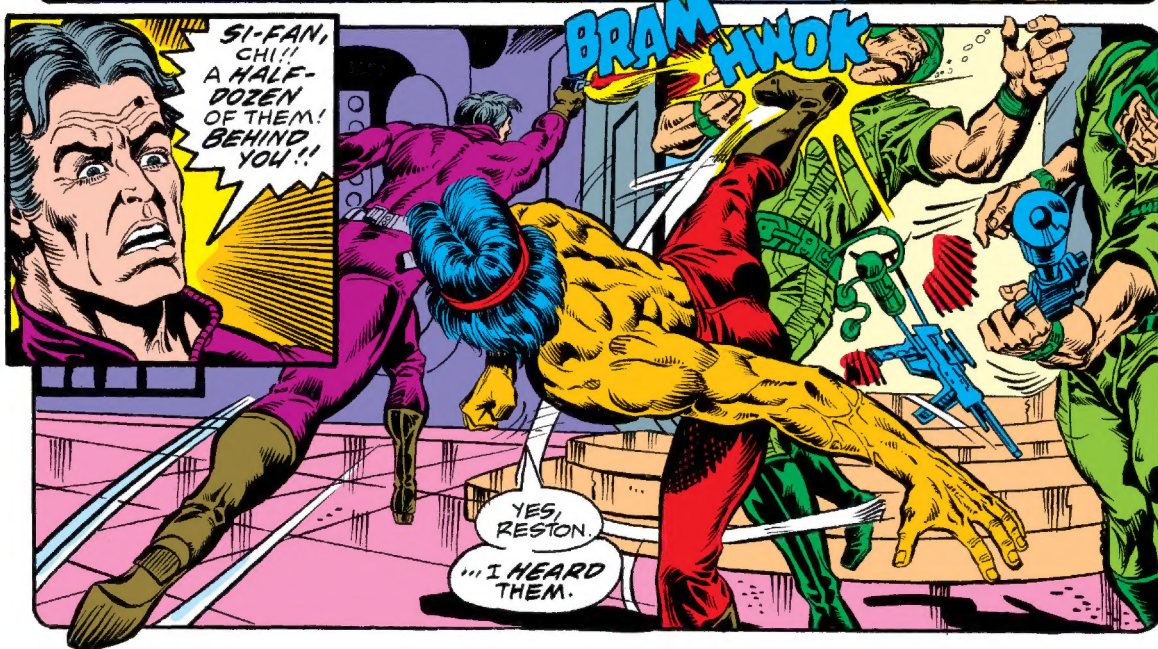
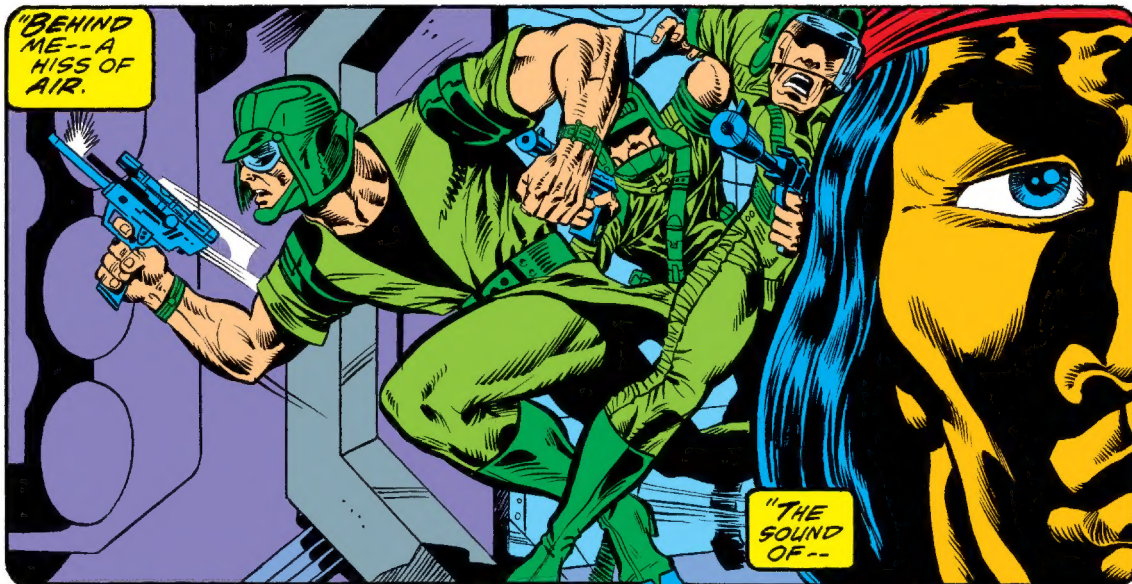
PERHAPS, RESTON.

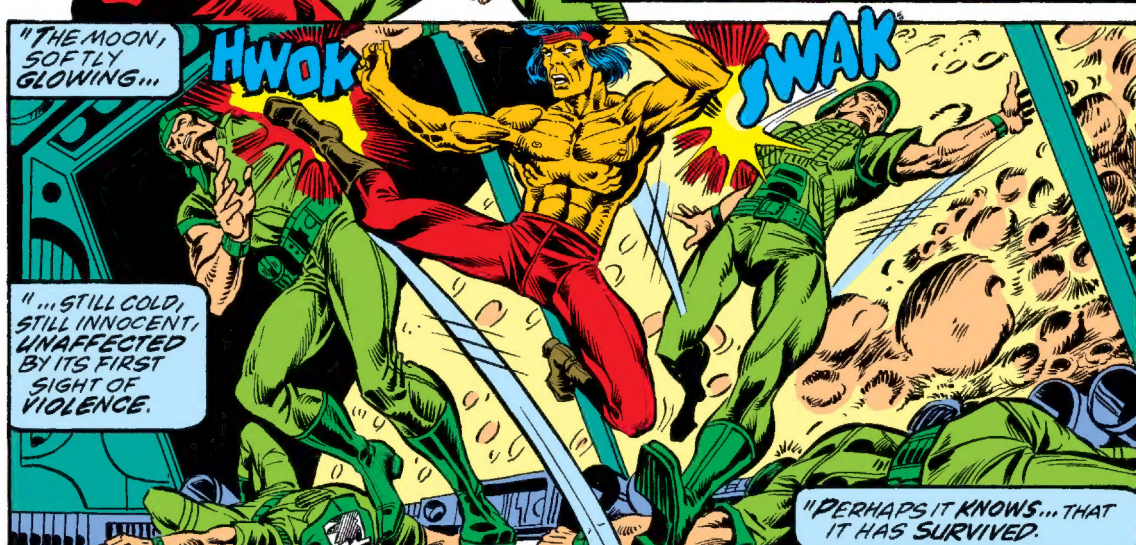
PERHAPS? YOU SHOT HIM YOURSELF-- ALTHOUGH YOU DID HAVE ME WORRIED THERE FOR A MOMENT, THE WAY YOU HESITATED, THINKING OF HIM AS YOUR FATHER RATHER THAN AS FU MANCHU...

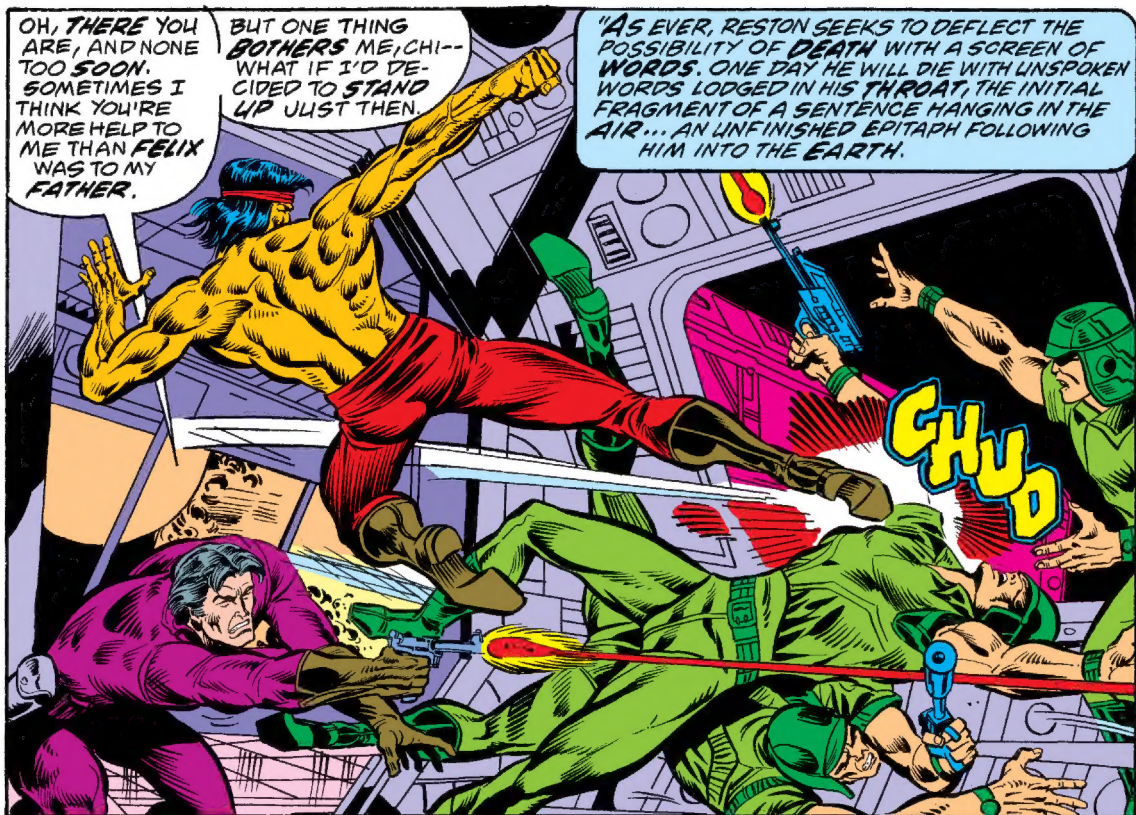
HERE, CHI, USE MY GUN!

YOU'VE GOT TO! IT'S THE ONLY WAY NOW!!

"I KNOW IT WAS TOUGH FOR YOU, CHI, BUT YOU DID IT... IN THE END. AND HE WAS DYING EVEN AS HE LEFT."







OH, THERE YOU ARE, AND NONE TOO SOON. SOMETIMES I THINK YOU'RE MORE HELP TO ME THAN FELIX WAS TO MY FATHER.

BUT ONE THING BOTHERS ME, CHI-- WHAT IF I'D DECIDED TO STAND UP JUST THEN.

"AS EVER, RESTON SEEKS TO DEFLECT THE POSSIBILITY OF DEATH WITH A SCREEN OF WORDS. ONE DAY HE WILL DIE WITH UNSPOKEN WORDS LODGED IN HIS THROAT, THE INITIAL FRAGMENT OF A SENTENCE HANGING IN THE AIR... AN UNFINISHED EPITAPH FOLLOWING HIM INTO THE EARTH.



"ONE SI-FAN LEFT. HE SPINS, KICKING, MISSING ME--BUT SNAPPING A CABLE.



"WHIPPING TOWARD ME!"

"MUST CATCH IT...

"...SEND IT BACK--



AARRGHH!

"--AT HIM.



NOW, AS I WAS SAYING-- WE MAY HAVE FOILED FU MANCHU'S SCHEME TO DESTROY THE MOON, BUT WE'RE STILL STUCK UP HERE IN THIS BLOODY SPACE STATION...

...AND UNTIL WE STAND SAFELY BACK ON GOOD OLD TERRA FIRMA, WE HAVE NOT SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THIS MISSION-- AT LEAST NOT FROM OLD CLIVE'S POINT OF VIEW.



AND IF I REMEMBER CORRECTLY, THE SHUTTLE-ROCKET'S BACK THIS WAY.

JUST HOPE IT'S GOT ENOUGH PETROL FOR THE RETURN TRIP.

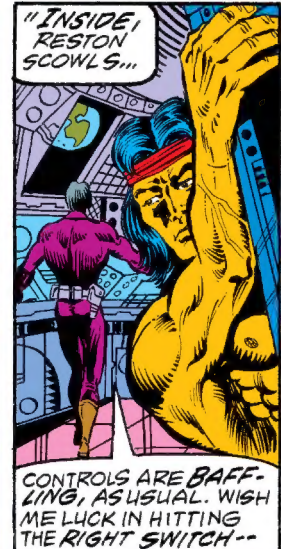


THERE IT IS, STILL DOCKED WHERE WE LEFT IT. I'LL TAKE THE ONE ON THE LEFT...



ALL ABOARD, MATES--

--AFTER WE PUNCH YOUR TICKETS, ANYWAY.

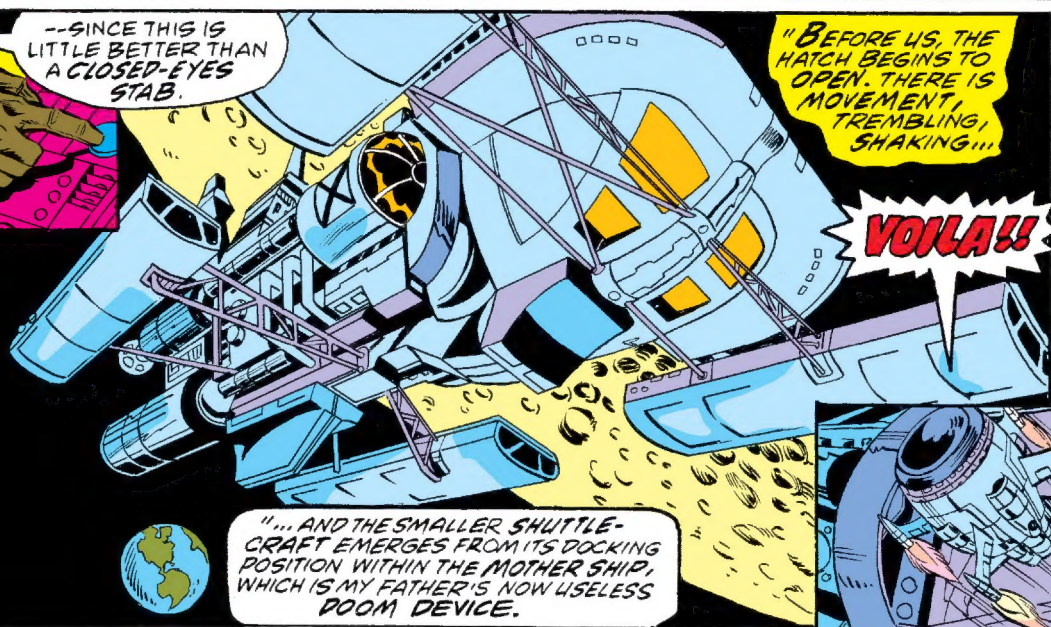


"INSIDE, RESTON SCOWLS..."

CONTROLS ARE BAFFLING, AS USUAL. WISH ME LUCK IN HITTING THE RIGHT SWITCH--



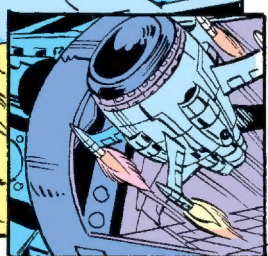
--SINCE THIS IS LITTLE BETTER THAN A CLOSED-EYES STAB.



"BEFORE US, THE HATCH BEGINS TO OPEN. THERE IS MOVEMENT, TREMBLING, SHAKING..."

VOILA!!

"... AND THE SMALLER SHUTTLE-CRAFT EMERGES FROM ITS DOCKING POSITION WITHIN THE MOTHER SHIP, WHICH IS MY FATHER'S NOW USELESS ROOM DEVICE.



"I HAVE THOUGHT OF LEIKO, HER DARK EYES, FOR A LONG PASSAGE THROUGH DEEPER DARKNESS. NOW, WE NEAR THE LIGHT OF EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE."

SINCE IT WOULDN'T DO TO TRY A CRASH LANDING, CHI--

--HERE'S HOPING I FIND ANOTHER RIGHT SWITCH--

VOILA AGAIN!

NOW IF ONLY THE CHUTES OPEN.

ELEMENTARY, INDEED! I MAY TAKE THIS UP AS MY NEW TRADE--SKY HERO RESTON OF THE SPACEWAYS!

ONE MOMENT--IS THAT YOU CRACKLING, MI-6?

WELL, WHY DON'T YOU MONITOR ALL FREQUENCIES? BEEN TRYING TO GET YOU FOR THE PAST HALF-HOUR!

DUCHARME AND A LOAD OF SI-FAN ARE STILL STRANDED UP THERE IN ORBIT--IF YOU CAN GET THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE TO FOOT THE BILL FOR A RESCUE ROCKET...

AND SOMEBODY BLOODY WELL BETTER FOOT THE BILL TO COME GET US. WE SEEM TO BE ADRIFT SOMEWHERE OFF THE EASTERN COAST OF ASIA, THANKS TO FU MANCHU'S AUTOMATIC PILOT, NO DOUBT.

ASIA?! GOOD LORD, MAN--YOU'RE WITHIN THE TARGET AREA!

STAND BY! I'LL NOTIFY THEM THAT YOU'VE ACCOMPLISHED YOUR MISSION. TELL THEM TO TAKE THE MISSILES OFF ALERT!

"MISSILES?"

TARGET AREA? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? NEVER MIND. WHAT ABOUT THE OTHERS?

EVERYONE IS FINE... EXCEPT THAT LARNER BLOKE. I'M AFRAID HE'S... BEEN ELIMINATED.

DEAD? LARNER... IS DEAD?!

YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THAT FIEND FU MANCHU DID TO HIS MIND. THE LADS IN PSYCHOLOGY HAD THE DEVIL OF A TIME RESTORING PETRIE'S TRUE PERSONALITY.

IT...UH...WILL BE SOME TIME BEFORE THE VESTIGIAL EFFECTS OF THEIR HYPNOSIS-REINDOCTRINATION COMPLETELY SUBSIDE.

BUT GETTING BACK TO BUSINESS, I MUST ADMIT WE WERE IN AN EXTREMELY PRECARIOUS POSITION BEFORE YOU, CHI, AND CLIVE MANAGED TO MIRACULOUSLY SAVE THE DAY.

THE PRIME MINISTER INSISTED ON PROMOTING ALL MISSILES TO FULL ALERT, EVEN COERCING THE AMERICANS INTO COOPERATION.

ALL OUR NUCLEAR WARHEADS WERE PRIMED AND AIMED AT EVERY SQUARE INCH OF CHINA, SHOULD YOU LADS HAVE FAILED.

"THEN...IT IS TRUE. THEY WOULD GO SO FAR...BEFORE DYING."

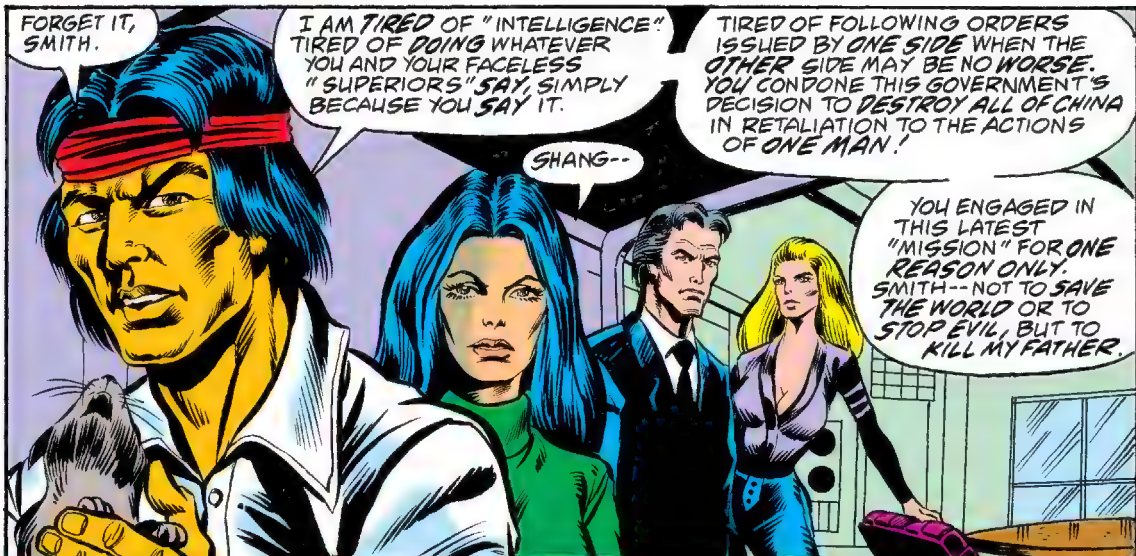
"BUT THAT'S ALL WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE NOW."

"I SUPPOSE MY REAL PURPOSE IN CALLING THIS MEETING WAS TO PROVIDE A FORUM OF CONFESSION --AN EXCUSE FOR OPENING A SMALL WINDOW ONTO MY SOUL."

"YOU SEE, NOW THAT FU MANCHU IS FINALLY DEAD, I FEEL RATHER EMPTY AND WITHOUT PURPOSE. I AM OLD, AND A HEAVY WEIGHT HAS JUST BEEN LIFTED FROM ME. PERHAPS IT'S TIME I SIMPLY... FLOATED AWAY."

"BEYOND THE WINDOWS, BEYOND SMITH'S VOICE, THE RAIN CONTINUES TO FALL. IT IS FITTING."

BUT...I'VE DECIDED TO CARRY ON, IN TRUE STIFF-UPPER-LIP FASHION. I HOPE YOU FOUR WILL STAY WITH ME, WORKING FOR BRITISH INTELLIGENCE. NOW HAVE YOU ANY THOUGHTS??"



FORGET IT, SMITH.

I AM TIRED OF "INTELLIGENCE" TIRED OF DOING WHATEVER YOU AND YOUR FACELESS "SUPERIORS" SAY, SIMPLY BECAUSE YOU SAY IT.

SHANG--

TIRED OF FOLLOWING ORDERS ISSUED BY ONE SIDE WHEN THE OTHER SIDE MAY BE NO WORSE. YOU CONDONE THIS GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO DESTROY ALL OF CHINA IN RETALIATION TO THE ACTIONS OF ONE MAN!

YOU ENGAGED IN THIS LATEST "MISSION" FOR ONE REASON ONLY. SMITH-- NOT TO SAVE THE WORLD OR TO STOP EVIL, BUT TO KILL MY FATHER.

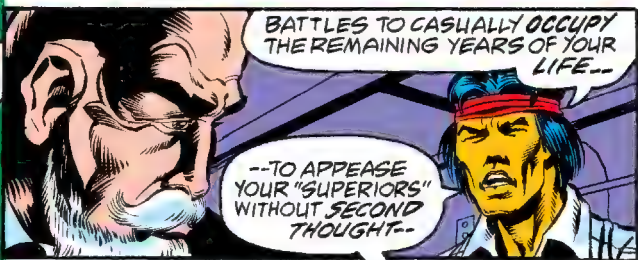
YOU USED US TO FINISH A 40-YEAR BATTLE YOU WERE UNABLE TO FINISH BY YOURSELF. NOW YOU WISH TO CONTINUE USING US--

--EMPTY BATTLES--

--IN YOUR FUTURE MEANINGLESS BATTLES--

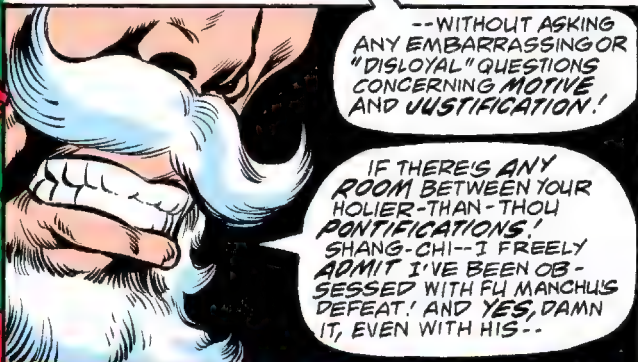


PRRR



BATTLES TO CASUALLY OCCUPY THE REMAINING YEARS OF YOUR LIFE--

--TO APPEASE YOUR "SUPERIORS" WITHOUT SECOND THOUGHT--



--WITHOUT ASKING ANY EMBARRASSING OR "DISLOYAL" QUESTIONS CONCERNING MOTIVE AND JUSTIFICATION!

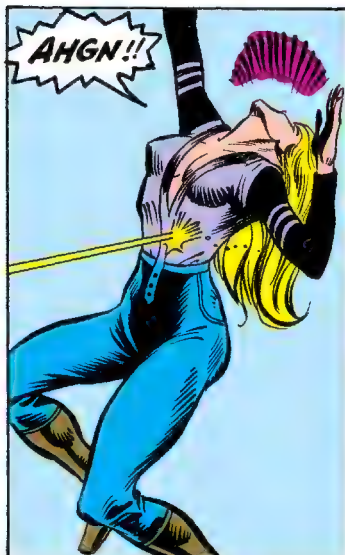
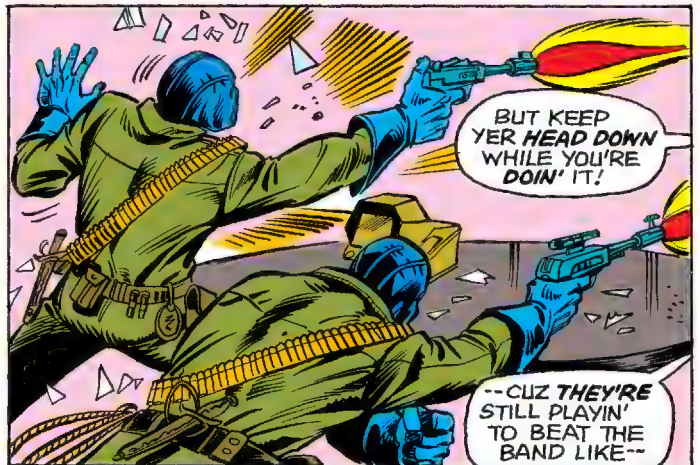
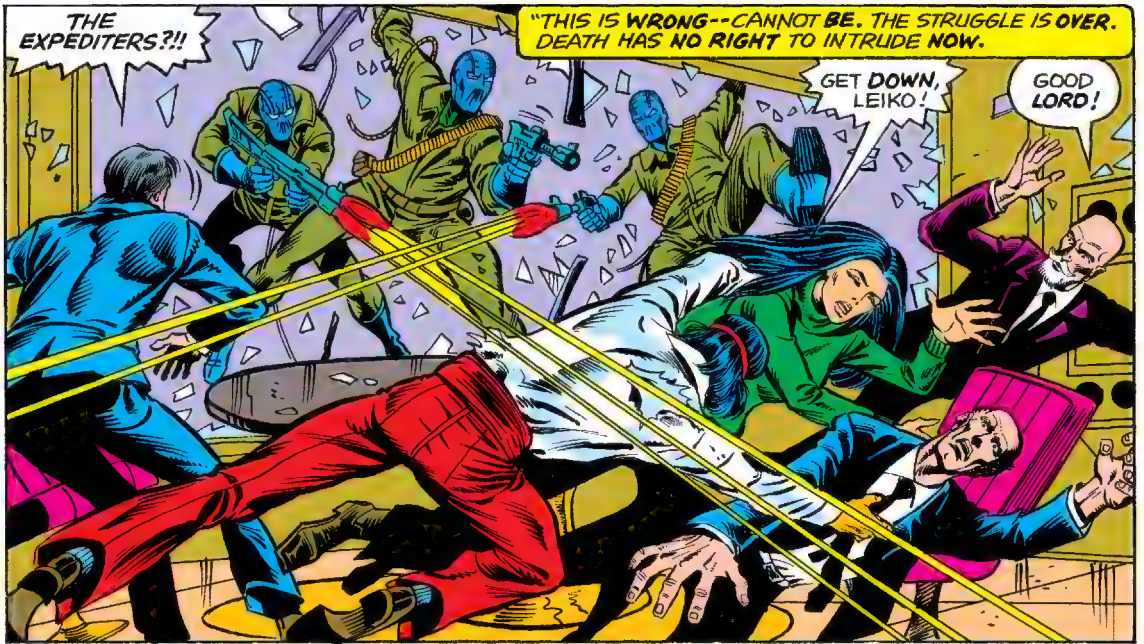
IF THERE'S ANY ROOM BETWEEN YOUR HOLIER-THAN-THOU PONTIFICATIONS! SHANG-CHI-- I FREELY ADMIT I'VE BEEN OBSESSED WITH FU MANCHU'S DEFEAT! AND YES, DAMN IT, EVEN WITH HIS--

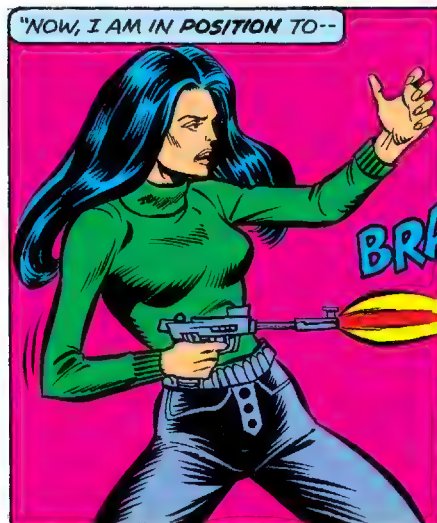
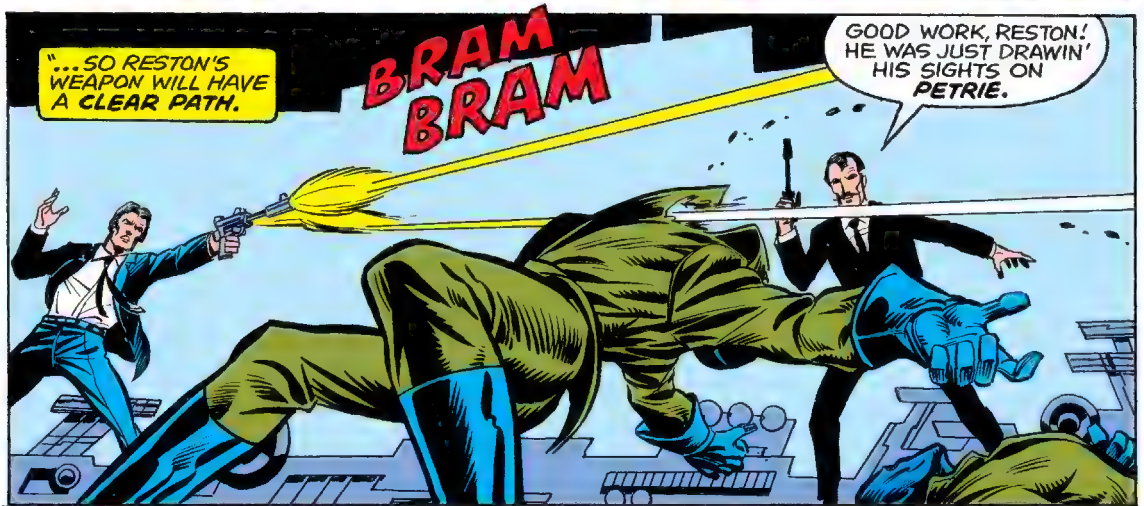


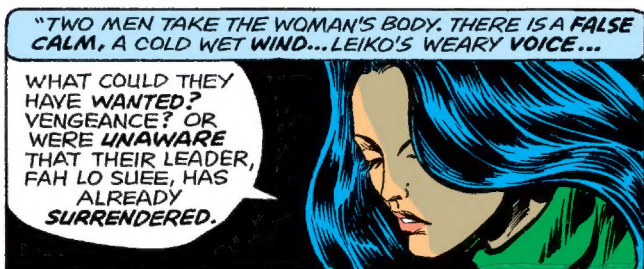
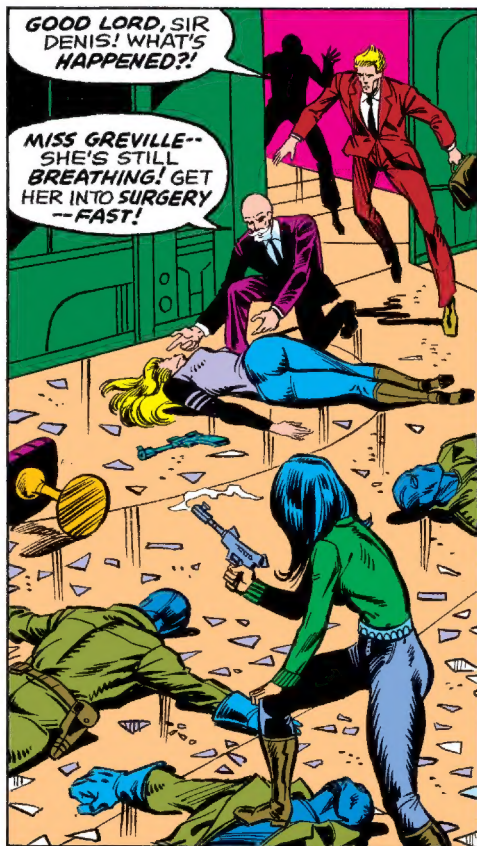
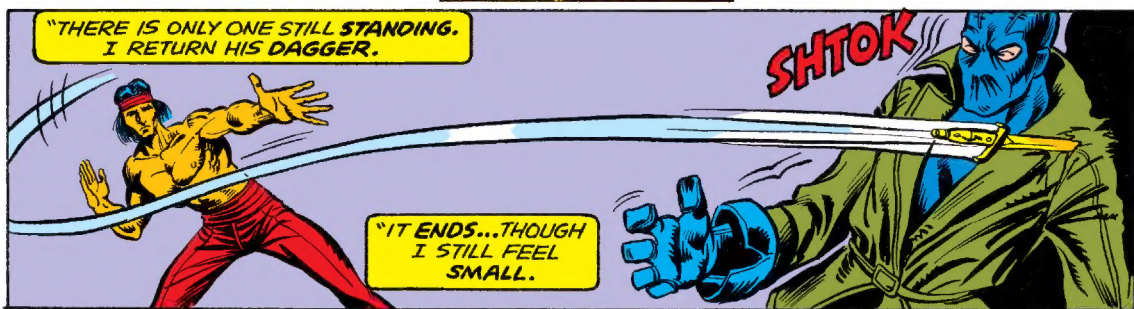
--DEATH!

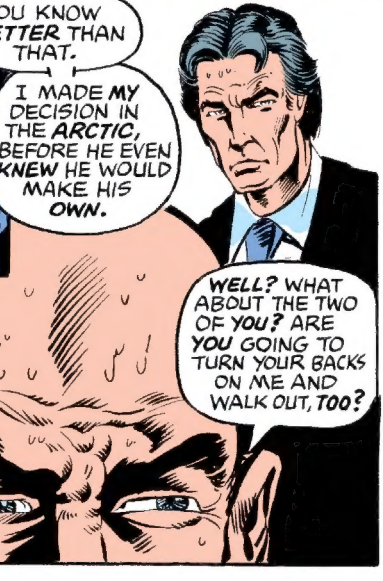
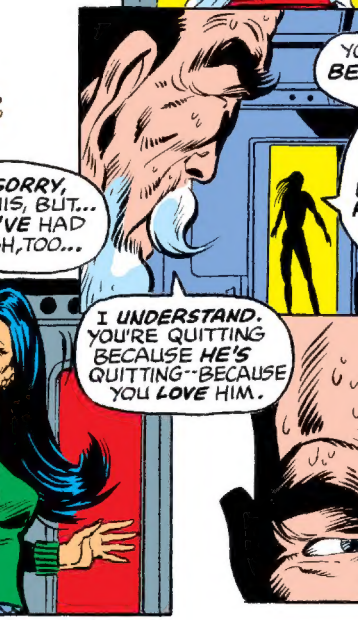
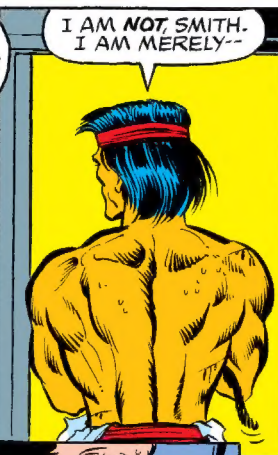
KEEESH

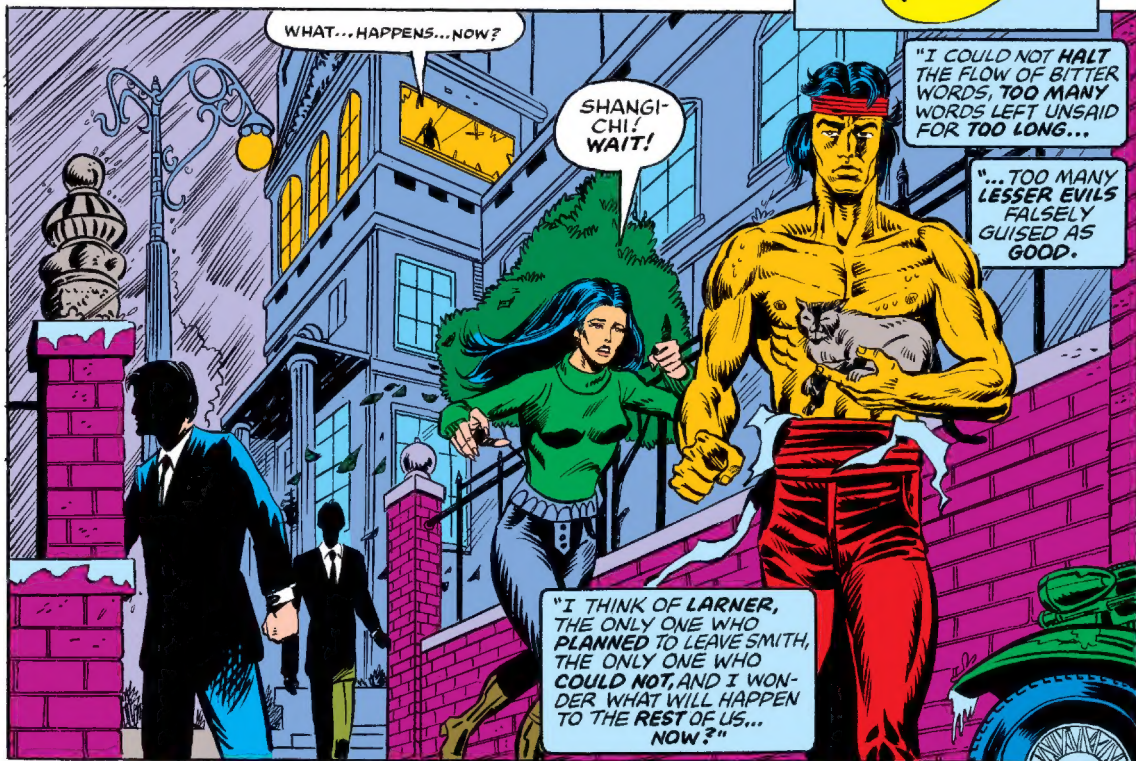
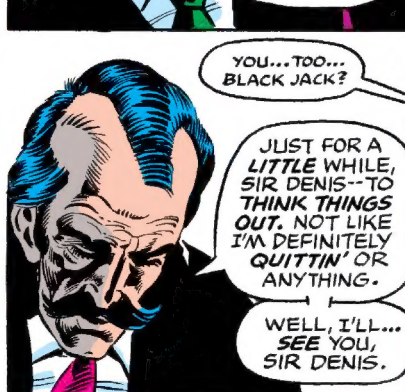
"BEHIND HIM-- GLASS RAINS INTO THE ROOM, THE BARRIER BETWEEN ONE WORLD AND ANOTHER SHATTERED.











NEXT ISSUE: ASK ANY SPY: IT AIN'T THAT EASY TO QUIT, AS FOUR DISTINCTLY UNSETTLED INDIVIDUALS LEARN, IN--

THE STORY OF WAR-YORE!

MISSIVES TO THE MASTER!

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Greetings, People: Hope you enjoy this last/first, conclusion/beginning, wrap-up/launch-out, epilogue/prologue issue. In other words, there are indeed some changes in store for the MASTER OF KUNG FU book, and in more than one sense of the word. For instance: One man's ending is another's beginning. So it is with Paul Gulacy and Jim Craig. As most of you know by now, Paul has decided to take an indefinite hiatus from the pages of MOKF—and, largely, from comics in general. Oh, he'll likely pop up here & there, now & then, but for the nonce the peerless Mr. Gulacy has chosen to concentrate on honing his skills in the painting field. Fitting, then, that his parting shot should be the cover he was never able to draw (for one reason or another, none good) during his stint on the interior of the book. And it's magnificent, ain't it? Thanks, Paul, for the cover and for all the other magnificence. Needless to say, good luck in your future.

Speaking of magnificence, ahem, we trust you've already gazed at Gentleman Jim Craig's debut on the interior art...? Yeah, we kinda thought you had. As far as the Bullpen is concerned, we couldn't be happier; Jim has done a superb job, we feel, in capturing the unique tone, mood, spirit, and characterization of an extremely difficult title, to say the least. And y'know what? According to the Toronto-to-Bedminster, Pa. grapevine, it's only gonna get *better*. Yep; Jim himself just phoned diehard-scripter Doug Moench to say that he's really digging Shang-Chi (not to mention Leiko, of course) and that he expects to attain a full head of steam faster than you can yell HIIIIYAAH! In the meantime, let us know how you feel about the lad's first shot at the book. (And welcome aboard, Jim!)

Now, before you string us up by the adjectives, maybe we can print a letter or three...

Dear Doug and Paul,

"Phantom Sand" in MOKF #47 was, for a variety of reasons, the best chapter of the six-part Fu Manchu saga to appear thus far. I reveled in its relentless drive, its non-stop intrigue, and its explosive finale, culminating with the defeat of Fah Lo Suee's faction of Si-Fan and its subsequent reabsorption into the "army" commanded by Fu Manchu himself. As the covers so often declare, it was "action all the way," but with a good deal of depth to it as well.

I mentioned intrigue. Well, completely aside from Leiko and Shang-Chi's short-lived disguises, there was a brief glimpse of the recuperating Nayland Smith, a one-panel shot of Dr. Petrie having his brain turned around, and the not unexpected (by *this* observer, anyway; I've learned to *expect* the unexpected) revelation that DuCharme is actually loyal to Fu Manchu, not Smith. How Sir Denis will react when he learns he's been triple-crossed is something for the future, but judging by the way things have been going for double-agents here of late, I don't like her chances at all. You don't agree? Ask Sir Herbert Griswold.

A number of "little things" contributed to the overall success of "Phantom Sand," nice leafy touches deserving mention. First, the ballet-like grace with which Leiko and Shang-Chi exited Fah Lo Suee's aircraft on page 11; much has already been said about the startling contrast between the beauty of movement and the ugliness of the raw, violent reality underlying hand-to-hand combat. This sequence underscores the point perfectly. The one-page love scene between the two characters is also worthy of comment. It was extremely genuine, devoid of schmaltz and soap operatics, and contained the delicately charming passage which provided this tale with its title: "The snow hisses in the wind, swirling...like phantom sand." Just beautiful, Doug. Which brings me to the last little thing contributing to my overall enjoyment of this issue, the

appearance of communications expert David Niven...I mean, Ward Sarsfield. This not only provided a light (albeit macabre) humorous touch before the story's ominous conclusion, but it also gave Doug the opportunity to name a character after Sir Arthur Sarsfield Ward, who wrote the Fu Manchu novels under the pseudonym of Sax Rohmer. This sort of "in joke" is something I always enjoy spotting.

And so, another example of comics-as-cinema (or is it cinema-as-comics?) passes on into the mists of time. There'll be a new one in thirty days, of course, and probably another of these deathless analytical missives to go with it. Till then, keep warm.

Ed Via
1648 Dean Road
Roanoke, VA 24018

What can we say, Ed? There are some six or seven of your highly perceptive letters in our Shang-Chi files, and we felt we just had to print at least *one* of them. None were exactly controversial or polemically discursive, but each and every one of them sure made us feel good. So I guess all we can really say is: Thanks, and keep writing!

Dear Doug and Paul,

Having been a MOKF reader since SPECIAL MARVEL EDITION #15, I think I know a good MOKF story when I see one. But because I still find Moench and Gulacy's work beyond words, I'll just say one thing:

After reading MASTER OF KUNG FU #45, I subscribed.

Harvey Chin
4635 Mia Circle
San Jose, CA 95136

Say, Harv, with the state of distribution being what it is these days, maybe that ain't a bad idea. Matter of fact, rumor has it that Marvel Vanguard Stan himself has been contemplating a subscription to MOKF. (Understandable since, after examining a recent Shang-Chi issue, the Smiley One deemed it "an exemplary comic book." And when not-so-faint praise like that comes straight from the horse's mouth...)

Honorable Marvelmen:

I'm not going to say much, but I do want you to know that MOKF has reached a new height of glory. Doug's current six-part saga should be made into a movie, and I really mean that! Furthermore, every panel Paul draws should be framed forever.

And by the way, when Leiko's not busy saving the world, send her over.

T. W. Carl
Box 145
Frenchtown, NJ 08825

Send Leiko to Frenchtown, New Jersey--?! Hmm...that's right across the Delaware River from Doug's Pennsylvania digs; in fact, he picks up the New York bus right on the main drag of Frenchtown every time he makes a pilgrimage to the hallowed halls, as it were, of Marvel. And since the main drag seems to be just about the *only* street in town, the Devil-May-Care Lad could be right outside your window now, T.W., bleary-eyed, shivering, and holding up the bus stop sign. So be careful with that bucket of scrubwater, huh? One of these days he just might have a certain dark-haired traveling companion with him...

And that's about it, folks. We're not exactly sure which of two possible stories next issue will host, but either way it'll be offbeat excitement from start to finish. It might be the special Demon-Mask interim story, illustrated by Pat Broderick, which features Shang-Chi and Black Jack on their own, as well as the return of Tarr's Murder Mansion—or it might be Jim Craig's second MOKF offering, featuring our entire cast of characters plus a bizarre new villain called War-Yore. (And there's also a near-future, brand-new Rufus T. Hackstaber epic lurking in the wings.) So until next issue, when we *all* learn what's cookin'...be good.